

The Journey Of True Love

Texts: Isaiah 50: 4-9

Philippians 2:5-11 (Series A, Passion Sunday) Ps. 188:1-2,19-29

Matthew 27:11-54

Prayer:

"Judas Iscariot went off to the chief priests and said, 'What are you willing to give me if I hand Him over to you?' They paid him thirty pieces of silver"
(Matthew 26:14-15)

As we continue to stay at home to prevent further spreading of covid-19, we are given a fresh opportunity, perhaps never undertaken before, namely, to read the full texts of today's readings without at once listening to the recitation by another.

Today is Palm Sunday. Today we begin Holy Week, the week that has Maundy Thursday and Good Friday in it. Lent, and especially Holy Week, is the season in the Church year in which Christians should give most solemn, sacred thoughts to the fundamentals of their religion.

We are moved in these days; to give much thought to the Upper Room event, to Gethsemane, and to Calvary. Our German brothers often speak of this week as "**Stille Woche,**" silent, or quiet, week.

Each year at this time, Judas' betrayal of Jesus for thirty pieces of silver reminds us that the "sell out" is not a new phenomenon on the human scene. Promises broken, loyalties betrayed, principles abandoned--these are not the inventions of our Age. What is new, however, is contemporary society's easy acceptance of the "**sell out**" spirit.

Oscar Wilde once wrote that, in modern society, "People know the price of everything but the value of nothing." Someone else has characterized our time as the "Age of the Sellout," in which "Everything is for sale. Every person has his or her price. Honesty and integrity are traded off, like chattels, for money and power.

" Although this assessment may be an overstatement, nevertheless it contains more than a grain of truth--enough truth, to course some concern. Whether it is the "Age of the Sellout" or the "Age of the Fallout" or the "Age of the Blowout," it is our Age.

This is the Time into which we, as a Christian People, have been called to *give light*. This is our one and only opportunity to be the "*salt of the earth*."

Columbia University Professor *Thomas Bever* recently said that our daily fare of misleading TV ads is permanently distorting children's views of morality, society, and business."

His statement was based on an in-depth study of TV viewers between the ages of five and twelve. Professor Bever concluded that by age twelve, many children already have been turned into cynics by TV.

They find it easier to believe that all TV commercials lie than to try to discard which, if any, are being truthful. In Professor Bever's words, "They become ready to believe that, like advertising, all businesses and all adult institutions are riddled with hypocrisy."

Appearances become more important than reality; the image more important than the person. That is why we are told it is naive, unrealistic, even unreasonable to believe in campaign promises. Said one political analyst: "Candidates are packaged and offered for sale to the public like commodities.

"Judas Iscariot went off to the chief priests and said, '*What are you willing to give me if I hand Him over to you.*' They paid him *thirty pieces of silver*, and from that time on he kept looking for an opportunity to hand Him over (Matthew 26:14-16). The biggest sell out of all time for thirty silver pieces: the price of a slave in those days!

In the New Testament, the Greek word for slave connotes a person who does two things: he does hard things and he does dirty things. So, the price was fixed and the high priests gathered together *thirty pieces* of silver, and they dropped them one-by-one on that hand that had been blessed by the Lord Himself when He called Judas to be an apostle. And Judas went out clutching those thirty pieces of silver. Remember this, however, all who can hear my voice: can sell the Lord, but we can never buy Him.

Remember also that He is always sold for a price out of all proportion to His true worth. Inevitably, we betrayers become sick of what we get, as Judas became sick (he flung the silver back into the faces of the high priests, saying, "*I have betrayed innocent blood*").

Jesus was truly our Good Shepherd when John says: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep...I lay down my life - only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again.

This command I received from my Father." In the halls of judgment, on the way to Calvary, and on the cross, amid all the indignities placed on Jesus. Amid all his sufferings, and in his death, it was the Son of God who was riding on.

There are two reasons for mentioning these things. First, the text says just that. No one can seriously think of these Holy Week events without thinking how Jesus, in his love for us, was marching on, ***the journey of True Love***. Secondly, some might think of Jesus in a pathetic sort of way. But don't do that! Instead, praise him, glorify him! This was his heavenly work for us. Never in history was there such love as this. Never before did God show himself as God did when our Lord rode into Jerusalem, into shame, suffering and death. All this was done to save humankind. ***It is the journey of True Love***

Jesus continues to ride on even in death and in life. Jesus' death was not the end of his life. On Easter Sunday he continued to ride on. Later he ascended into heaven; from there he continues to march on as the Gospel message is carried through out the world in countless ages. Untold numbers of saints have entered heaven's gates and are now living with our Savior in glory.

This is a great day in the Church. It means little unless Jesus is truly King in and over your life! The world in which we live needs to have a clear vision of Jesus as Lord and Savior. Each of us needs to see him riding on as well.

One of these days we are going to meet this Son of God who rides on - meet him face to face. He is going to raise those pierced hands and say: "Come, you who are blessed by My Father, take your inheritance" (*Matthew 25*).

He will not abandon us. He will lead us into our eternal fulfillment. We can rely on that absolutely. Jesus is loyal. Jesus keeps His promises. Jesus will never sell us out. We can sell Our Lord; but He cannot be bought.

Let us remember to pray all for levels of government and all people of our beloved country, Canada and the world. For our doctors, nurses, and first responders. Pray for those affected with the COVID-19, and families who have lost their loved one from this virus. Let us all do what is possible such as staying indoors as much as possible, wash hands often, eat right, read and meditate on God's word and let God do what is impossible heal our world of this virus.

Make melodies in your heart with these hymns:

- All Glory, Laud and Honour # 344
- Comfort, comfort Now My People # 256
- Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending # 435

May God keep us in his grace.

Amen.

